Solicitor General and Public Security

VICTIMS SERVICES BRANCH STATUS REPORT

2008-2009

Government of Alberta
Solicitor General and Public Security

Alberta

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Report Highlights

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Total financial expenditures for the Victims Services Branch in 2008-2009 were $24,761,000.
- A total of $11,623,272 was provided to eligible victims of crime by the Financial Benefits Program during this period.
- The Minister approved grants from the Victims of Crime Fund totaling $7,435,353 for 97 victim service programs in the fiscal year 2008-2009. This amount reflects an increase of 36% over the previous year's funding.
- The total amount paid to victims programs from the Victims of Crime Fund in 2008-2009 was $9,252,263.
- The Minister has committed to an additional $7,023,295 for multi-year grants from 2009-2010 to 2011-2012.
- Police-based programs (RCMP, municipal police, and First Nations police) received 67% ($4,993,476) of grant funds for 2008-2009.
- Community-based programs (programs that respond to the needs of victims of crime in specialized ways) received 33% ($2,441,877) of grant funds for 2008-2009.
- As of March 31, 2009, Alberta had a network of 73 police-based victim service programs operating 119 victim service units.
- Victim service programs reported responding to 43,122 new cases of crime or tragedy; 26,899 or 62% of those new cases involved assistance to victims of violent crime.
- Victim service programs reported providing services to 58,828 people in 2008-2009, of which 48,877 (83%) were adults and 9,951 (17%) were under the age of 18.
- 1,916 volunteer advocates and board members contributed a total of 178,659 volunteer hours in 2008-2009.
- *Providing information* was the most frequent type of assistance provided for new and ongoing cases.
- *General assistance* provided (information, crisis intervention and referrals) accounted for the majority (42%) of advocates' time.
- 12,934 Victim Impact Statement packages were distributed to victims of crime in 2008-2009. The majority were distributed in cases of assault.

Business Plan

BUSINESS PLAN

All Government of Alberta Ministries are responsible for preparing three-year business plans in accordance with the *Government Accountability Act* and established accounting practices. The Victims Services Branch continues to improve its performance and services by striving for the goals laid out by the 2008-2011 departmental business plan.

Goal Six of the business plan, "Victims of Crime receive assistance, information and support" means that the Ministry ensures that eligible victims of crime receive prompt financial benefits and assists community groups and organizations to establish accountable programs and initiatives that meet the needs of victims of crime.

The strategies for Goal 6 are:

6.1 Provide prompt financial assistance for eligible victims through the Financial Benefits Program.

6.2 Provide funding through the Victims of Crime Fund Grants Program to eligible groups and organizations that provide programs and initiatives that benefits victims of crime.

6.3 Build capacity for the provision of enhanced victim services within community groups, Aboriginal and isolated communities.

6.4 In consultation with key stakeholders, develop new programs for victims of crime, such as the provision for counseling services and financial assistance for attending specified court proceedings.

6.5 Implement an enhanced accountability framework for police-based programs and develop an enhanced framework for community programs.

6.6 Enhance training for victim service unit coordinators, volunteer advocates and criminal justice professionals.

HISTORY

Victims of Crime Act

The *Victims of Crime Act* (*Act*) was proclaimed August 1, 1997 excluding provisions directly associated with the delivery of financial benefits to individual victims of crime; these were proclaimed on November 1, 1997. The *Victims of Crime Act* replaced the *Victims' Programs Assistance Act* and the *Criminal Injuries Compensation Act*.

Victims of Crime Fund

The Victims of Crime Fund (Fund), a regulated fund held and administered by the Minister of Finance, operates under the authority of the *Victims of Crime Act*, Chapter V-3, Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000. The Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security is responsible for the Fund under the authority of the *Government Organization Act*, Statutes of Alberta. The Fund is financed through a levy on provincial and federal fines.

The purpose of the Fund is to provide grants to victims programs and to pay benefits to victims, or their dependents, who suffer injury or death as the result of a criminal offence as specified in the regulations of the *Victims of Crime Act*. As of March 31, 2009 the Fund had net assets of $46,734,000.

The Minister, in accordance with the *Act* and regulations uses the Fund for:

- grants under section 11 of the *Act* with respect to programs that benefit victims of crime
- costs incurred by the Committee and the Criminal Injuries Review Board in carrying out their duties
- remuneration and expenses payable to the members of the Committee and the Criminal Injuries Review Board
- financial benefits payable pursuant to the *Act*
- paying the costs of administering the *Act*

In May 2005, the *Act* incorporated the Canadian Statement of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime which reiterate the need to treat victims with courtesy, compassion, respect and privacy. The principles state victims should be provided with information about the role they play within the justice system and acknowledgement that victim's views and concerns are important.

Under the *Act*, the Minister has appointed a Director who is responsible for providing victims and their families with general information concerning services available for victims, how the justice system operates, and overall administration of the *Act*. The Director also evaluates applications for, and makes decisions respecting eligibility for financial benefits in accordance with section 13 of the *Act*. As well, the Director is a point of contact for victims who feel they have not been treated in accordance with the principles of the *Act*, providing them with information on how to resolve their concerns.

Two core programs operate under the *Act* – a financial benefits program for eligible victims who have suffered injury as a result of a violent criminal offence, and a grants program that provides funding to eligible groups and organizations offering information, assistance and support to victims during their involvement in the criminal justice process.

Committee Membership

VICTIMS OF CRIME PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

The *Victims of Crime Act* established the Victims of Crime Programs Committee, whose members are appointed by the Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security. The Committee evaluates grant applications from eligible programs and makes recommendations to the Minister, who has final approval of grants awarded.

Committee Meetings

The Committee consists of five members: three members representing the community-at-large, one member representing the police, and one member representing government.

In the regular grant cycle the committee meets twice per year to evaluate grant applications submitted for the April 1st and October 1st application deadlines.

In 2008-2009, an additional $3 million was allocated to the victims of crime grants program which resulted in a special grant period (for one year only) with a June 17th application deadline.

As a result of the special grant period, the Committee met three times in 2008-2009 (June, August and December) to review the applications and make decisions regarding funding.

The Committee recommended 66 grant applications and 31 in term grant increases to the Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security in 2008-2009.

Financial Benefits Program

FINANCIAL BENEFITS PROGRAM

In 1997, Alberta's *Victims of Crime Act* introduced the Financial Benefits Program, which is supported by the Fund.

The Financial Benefits Program recognizes victims who were injured as a direct result of crime in Alberta. It provides direct assistance with a one-time financial benefit based on the severity of the victim's injuries. The benefit calculation is prescribed in the regulations to the *Act*. A supplemental monthly benefit of $1,000 for eligible victims who are fully dependent on others for basic living functions due to their injuries, was introduced in the spring of 2008. As financial benefits are awarded based on injury, victims may also seek restitution or take civil action for the recovery of costs or losses from the offender through the courts, such as compensation for costs or losses, property damage, medical expenses, funeral costs, loss of wages or pain and suffering.

In order to qualify for a financial benefit, victims must report the crime to police within a reasonable period of time and cooperate with the investigation into the incident; however, charges do not have to be laid for a victim to receive benefits. There is a two year time limit to apply for financial benefits; applications must be received within two years of the date of the incident. Additional time to apply may be considered if the victim was unable to submit an application due to circumstances.

In 2008-2009, 2,385 applications for financial benefits were received. During this period, a total of $11,623,272 was provided from the Fund for physical and emotional injuries sustained as a result of violent crime committed in Alberta. Ten victims qualified for supplemental benefits in 2008-2009.

CRIMINAL INJURIES REVIEW BOARD

Criminal Injuries Review Board

The Criminal Injuries Review Board considers requests for review of decisions on Financial Benefits Program applications. Applicants must submit requests for review within thirty days of receiving the decision on their application. However, this deadline may be extended if the Board considers it appropriate to do so. The Board Chair must review all requests for review and may refuse the request if it is found to have no merit. If a request is to proceed, a panel of three Board members holds a hearing to consider the request. The Board may confirm, vary or rescind the decision of the Director on the application. Applicants can attend the hearing and may be accompanied by a family member, friend, support person or legal counsel. Others may only attend hearings if approved by the Board.

Hearings are generally held monthly, alternating between Calgary and Edmonton. All decisions of the Board are final and may only be appealed to the Courts on a question of law or jurisdiction.

In 2008-2009, 223 requests for review were concluded. Two hundred and thirty-two reviews were heard by the Board, over 39 hearing days.

GRANT FUNDING AGREEMENTS

Grant Funding Formula

Programs approved for grant funding are required to enter into a Conditional Grant Agreement with the Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security. In accordance with the agreement, funded programs are required to submit quarterly program activity reports, annual financial statements, and a final evaluation report upon expiry of the funding term.

The grant funding formula ensures fair and equitable allocation of grant monies province wide through the establishment of a base funding amount for police-based victim service programs. The base funding amount reflects a commitment in making police-based programs a funding priority.

In 2008-2009, an additional $3 million was allocated to the victims of crime grants program which resulted in a special grant period (for one year only). Grants were calculated on the basis of a new funding formula that allowed police-based victim service units to receive funding on the basis of all crime statistics, not just serious and violent crimes. The formula also resulted in an increase in the base funding amount for police-based victim service units and an increase in maximum funding for police-based and community-based programs.

The formula:

- Allocates a specified base funding amount from the Victims of Crime Fund to police-based programs who provide victim services.
- Utilizes a per crime amount, calculated using the Uniform Crime Report data on all crime in the service area, as submitted to Statistics Canada by all police services.
- Establishes a minimum base funding award to police-based victim service programs of $15,000 per program per year (a $7,000 increase over the previous funding formula).
- Establishes a maximum grant amount of $150,000 to both police-based and community-based victim programs (a fifty percent increase over the previous funding formula).
- The police based programs in Calgary and Edmonton received a maximum grant amount of $300,000 (three times the maximum amount of $100,000 in the previous funding formula).

Discretionary Funding Factors

In addition to the base funding amount, police-based victim service programs may request additional funding if any of the following discretionary factors apply:

- large geographical area/low population density
- unique demographics
- weak economic base
- lack of other support services
- new programs or projects
- other special circumstances that may be identified by the applicant.

Specialized community programs or organizations that support victims during the criminal justice process may also apply for funding from the Victims of Crime Fund. The maximum grant amount for community based programs is $150,000.

Conditional Grant Agreements are usually one year in duration; however eligible programs may request multi-year grant funding commitments up to three years. The multi-year commitment is available for established programs that have operated successfully for three years in partnership with Victims Services, Alberta Solicitor General and Public Security; met the conditions of previous funding agreements; and demonstrated sound management and fiscal practices. The multi-year option enables these programs to budget for the future based on secure funding, thus facilitating longer term planning.

Approved Grants

In 2008-2009, the Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security approved grants totaling $7,435,353, dispersed to 97 programs. This is the highest dollar amount granted in the history of the program and represents a 36% increase from 2007-2008 (**Figure 1**). An additional $1,896,910 funding approved in previous multi-year agreements was allocated to victims programs resulting in a total of $9,332,263 paid for the 2008-2009 fiscal year. The Minister has also committed to an additional $7,023,295 for multi-year grants from 2009-2010 to 2011-2012.

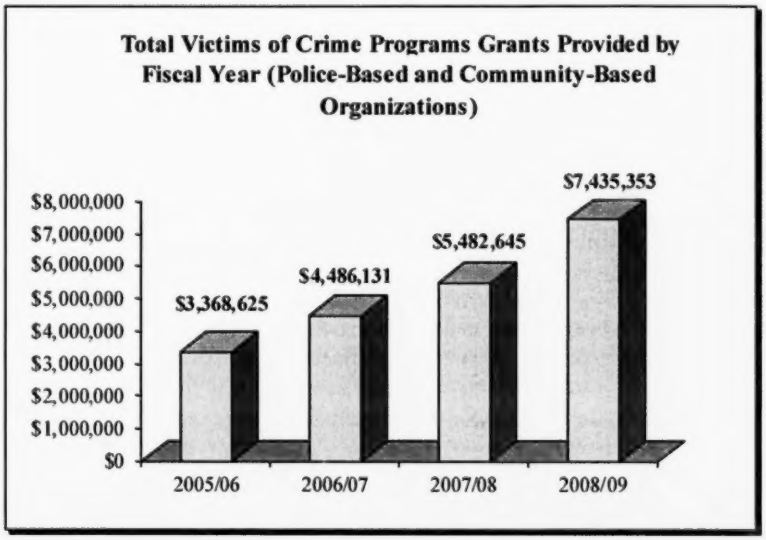


Figure 1

Police-based Programs

Of the programs that received funding in 2008-2009, 20 police-based programs were approved for grants for a one year term, for a total of $1,222,978. Twenty-six police-based programs were approved for multi-year funding from 2009-2010 to 2011-2012; the first year of their disbursement amounted to $2,633,753. In the special grant period (June 2008), 24 police-based units received approval for an increase to their grant funding for 2008-2009, and in some cases the remaining years of their multiple year grant period (2009-2010 and 2010-2011).

In 2008-2009 grants to police-based victim service programs amounted to $4,993,476 (67%) of the *total* grant funding. Of that amount, $3,738,566 (75%) was granted to RCMP affiliated victim service programs. Municipal police victim service programs received $1,204,910 (24%), while the remaining $50,000 (approximately 1%) was awarded to First Nations police victim service programs (**Figure 2**).

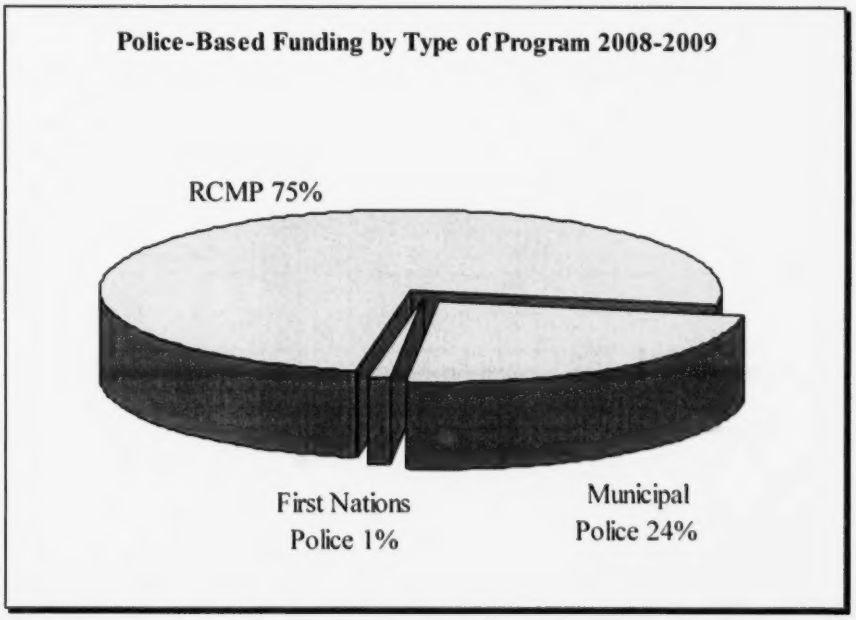


Figure 2

Services Provided

A network of police-based victim assistance programs now provide services for victims across the province. As of March 31, 2009, there were 73 police-based victims programs operating 119 victim service units in Alberta.

Services provided to victims include intervention and support, information about their case and criminal justice proceedings, information about medical, legal and social services available to assist, referrals to other community agencies, as well as court room orientation and accompaniment. Police-based programs also provide victims of crime with information about completing victim impact statements, requesting restitution, and applying for financial benefits. These programs provide a continuum of services to victims from the time of first response by police to the disposition of the case by the courts. Services are provided in accordance with provincial guidelines.

POLICE-BASED VICTIM SERVICE UNITS (2008-2009)

Approved Grants for Police-based Programs

The following police-based programs received approval for one-year grants in 2008-2009:

Program Name	Approved Grant Amount
Assumption Region Community Policing Society	$124,196
Athabasca Regional Victim Services Society	$66,473
Beaverlodge Victim Services Unit Society	$20,000
Bow Island – Foremost Victims Assistance Association	$22,260
Brooks & District Victims Assistance Association	$139,750
Cochrane and Area Victim Services Society	$80,000
Coronation/Consort Victim Services Unit	$32,000
Crowsnest Pass Victim Services Unit	$54,764
Flagstaff's Initiative to Relationship & Spousal Trauma Society	$38,340
Hinton District Victim Services Society	$65,000
Jasper Victims Services Society	$50,000
Maskwasis Victim Service Unit	$100,000
Peace Regional Victim Services Society	$125,000
Redcliff Victim Service Unit Association	$41,135
Rimbey & District Victim Services Society	$40,750
Slave Lake Victims Services Society	$50,000
St. Paul and Area Victim Services Society (increase to existing grant)	$54,310
Taber Crime & Abuse Prevention Society	$24,000
Three Hills Victim Services Association	$70,000
Vulcan Regional Victims Services Society	$25,000
Sub Total	**(A) $1,222,978**

Multi-Year Grants

The Victims of Crime Fund grants also supported the following police-based programs through multi-year grants for 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011. In some cases the multi-year grants extend to 2011-2012 depending on the timing of the grant period for each respective organization (which does not necessarily coincide with the government fiscal period of April 1 – March 31).

Program Name	Approved Grant Amount
Barrhead Community Victim Services Unit Association	$26,066
Battle River Victim Assistance Society	$93,000
Beaver County Victim Services Association	$33,700
Bonnyville Victim Services Society	$113,500
Bow Valley Victim Services Association	$70,517
Calgary Police Service Victim Assistance Unit	$300,000
Camrose & District Victim Services Society	$60,000
Cardium Region Victim Services Unit Society	$105,000
Cold Lake Victim Services Society	$140,000
Edmonton Police Service Victim Service Unit	$300,000
Edson and District Victim Services Society	$55,000
Fort McMurray Victim Services Society	$150,000
Grande Prairie & District Victims' Assistance Program	$150,000
High Level Community Policing Society	$136,000
Innisfail & District Victim Services Society	$24,306
Lethbridge Detachment Victim Assistance Society	$17,185
Mackenzie Regional Community Policing Society	$127,000
Medicine Hat Police Service Victim Assistance Unit	$121,600
Ponoka Victims Services Association	$80,000
Ranchlands Victim Services Society	$100,000
Red Deer Rural RCMP Victim Assistance Society	$66,002
St. Paul & Area Victim Services Society	$115,700
Strathmore Regional Victim Services Society	$64,000
Victim Services Unit (Association) – Sturgeon Region	$60,000
Volunteer Programs Association - Fort Saskatchewan	$60,177
Westlock Community Victim Services Unit Association	$65,000
Sub Total	**(B) $2,633,753**

Multi-Year Grants that Received Increased Funding for 2008-2009

In the special grant period (June 2008), the following Victim Service Units were approved for a grant increase in 2008-2009, or in some cases for the remaining years of their multiple year grant period through to 2009-2010 and 2010-2011:

Program Name	Original Grant Amount for 2008-2009	Approved Grant increase for 2008-2009
Airdrie and District Victims Assistance Society	$52,859	$31,094
Big Country Victim Services Association	$84,000	$10,000
Blood Tribe Police Services Victim Unit	$100,000	$50,000
Calgary Police Service Victim Assistance Unit	$100,000	$200,000
Chinook Arch Victims' Services Society	$45,000	$22,962
Edmonton Police Service Victim Service Unit	$100,000	$200,000
Fairview Victims Assistance Association	$14,415	$585
Foothills Regional Victim Services Association	$64,000	$30,000
Grande Cache Victim Services Society	$15,000	$35,415
Heartland Victim Services Unit Society	$25,950	$8,845
High Prairie & District RCMP Victims Assistance Society	$65,000	$25,000
Highway 43 RCMP Victims' Services Unit Society	$55,000	$31,160
Lac La Biche Society Victims Services Unit	$100,000	$50,000
Lacombe Victim Services Association	$13,875	$16,125
Leduc and District Victim Assistance Society	$100,000	$50,000
Lethbridge Regional Police Service	$100,000	$50,000
Red Deer City RCMP Victim Service Unit	$90,000	$50,000
Redwater - Smoky Lake Victim Services Society	$49,500	$35,000
Rocky & District Victim Services Unit Society	$50,000	$32,760
St. Albert Victim Service Association	$35,000	$55,761
Strathcona County RCMP Victim Services Unit	$30,869	$78,093
Sylvan Lake and District Victim Services Association	$55,900	$21,051
Wetaskiwin & District Victim Services Society	$86,528	$52,894
Sub Total	**$1,432,896**	**(C) $1,136,745**

Total Grants *approved* for police-based programs in 2008-2009 were: $4,993,476 (Columns A+B+C).

COMMUNITY-BASED VICTIM SERVICE UNITS (2008-2009)

Community-Based Programs

Community-based organizations provide a valuable specialized service to victims of crime, and are eligible for funding through the Victims of Crime Fund (VOCF) grants program. Community programs were allocated $2,441,877 (33%) of *total* grants awarded in 2008-2009 (**Figure 3**).

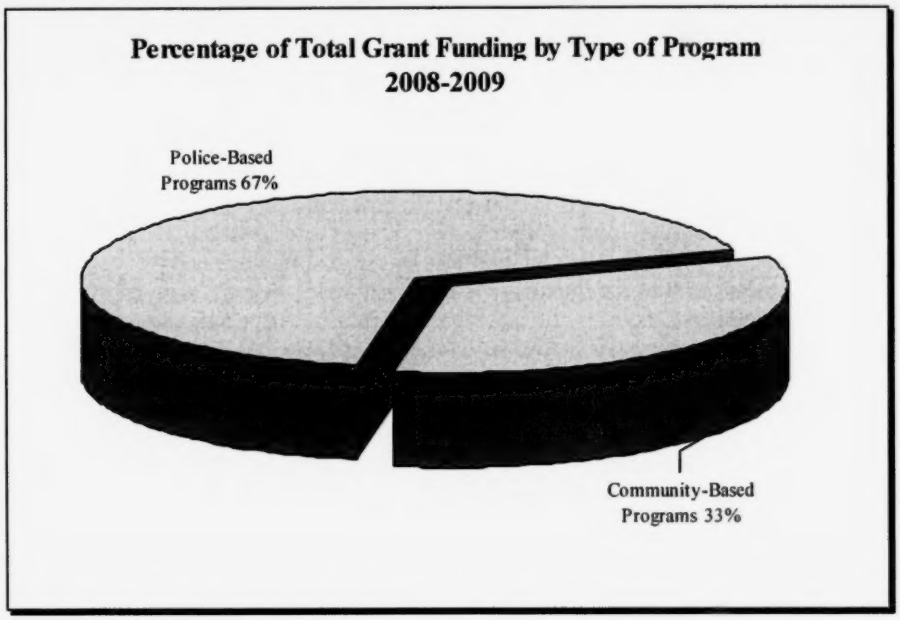


Figure 3

Approved Grants for Community-based Programs

One Year Grants:

Alberta Association of Sexual Assault Centres (AASAC)	**$115,000**

The Alberta Association of Sexual Assault Centres (AASAC) is an umbrella organization that represents its member organizations. AASAC provides three key functions: 1) it promotes the advancement of core services for sexual assault centres in Alberta including crisis services, counseling police and court support, education and outreach, 2) it works towards increasing recognition and support for sexual assault centres throughout the province, and 3) it provides a unified voice on sexual violence. Grant funding will assist AASAC to undertake two inter-related projects to increase public awareness about sexual assault. The first project is the development of an informational video for victims about the criminal justice system and their options/rights in the criminal justice process. The video will be an important tool for individuals with limited literacy skills, and individuals who live in rural/isolated communities. The second project is the development of an educational program to help increase men's awareness about sexual assault issues to help promote greater prevention in the issues, and support of sexual assault victims.

Alliance to End Violence Society of Calgary	**$138,000**

The Alliance to End Violence (AEV) was established in 1991, and is comprised of four previously independent organizations whose mission is to strengthen community capacity and support a seamless continuum of services to help prevent family, sexual and other forms of interpersonal violence and abuse. In the spring of 2007, the Alliance to End Violence Society of Calgary established a working group of community stakeholders called the Action Group on Elder Abuse (AGEA) to develop a coordinated response model for victims of Elder Abuse in the Calgary region. In 2008, AGEA built upon this network, and delivered two workshops called *Pulling Back the Curtain*, to examine different elder abuse response models. A task team was formed following the workshop to draft the Calgary response model that was presented in the community in late 2008.

Approved Grants for Community-based Programs

Calgary Chinese Elderly Citizens Association (CCECA)	**$114,964**

The Calgary Chinese Elderly Citizen's Association (CCECA) was first established in 1985. It is the first social services organization in Calgary to serve Chinese seniors, and currently has 5,300 members. CCECA's mandate is to provide a supportive and barrier-free environment to help bridge the gap for Chinese seniors and new immigrants to live an independent and fulfilled life in Canada. CCECA provides a number of services including: providing information, providing assistance with benefit applications, providing assistance with transportation and home support, and support in family violence situations. Grant funding will help the CCECA address the issue of domestic violence (including elder abuse) through research on family violence within the immigrant community as well as the development of a training manual, creation of an information package on cultural competency for mainstream service providers, public awareness campaigns, and translation of materials.

Canadian Society for the Investigation of Child Abuse	**$50,000**

The Canadian Society for the Investigation of Child Abuse (CSICA) was formed in 1985 in response to a growing need for a coordinated, professional approach to child abuse investigations in the Calgary area. Since its inception, CSICA has provided a court preparation program to more than one thousand victims of child abuse and witnesses. The program ensures that parents/caregivers receive information about the court process, and learn how to support their child through this process. Children have the opportunity to address apprehensions through role plays and a tour of the courtroom. CSICA recently developed a web-based program that allows Victim Service Units in rural locations to receive training at a distance, and deliver a sophisticated court preparation agenda to victims of child abuse in their communities. The innovative web-based program offers an interactive website for children and teens to help them prepare for the court process.

Approved Grants for Community–based Programs

Catholic Social Services	**$150,000**

Catholic Social Services (CSS) was founded in 1961. CSS is a private, non-profit social service organization that offers more than 130 programs to people of all faith and cultures. From 2006 to 2008, CSS received funding to support their Elderly Adult Resource Services Program (EARS). In 2007-08, the program evolved and divided into three programs to provide a continuum of services for older adults experiencing abuse. In 2008-2009, CSS received grant funding to support these programs including the Elder Abuse Victims Services Program (EAVSP). EAVSP provides information, referrals, emotional support, court preparation and accompaniment, and follow-up services to older adult abuse victims involved in the criminal justice system. The EAVSP works closely with the Elder Abuse Intervention Team (that consists of a police officer and a social worker) when abuse has occurred and criminal charges are laid.

Central Alberta Women's Emergency Shelter Society	**$97,095**

The Central Alberta Women's Emergency Shelter Society (CAWES) provides temporary refuge for women and children escaping sexual abuse and family violence. CAWES also coordinates the Domestic Violence Court Case Coordination Project in collaboration with the RCMP, Crown Prosecutors, Community Corrections, Children's Services, Women's Outreach, and the Crisis Centre. The project operates within the Domestic Violence Docket court in Red Deer to ensure that cases are dealt with in a timely, efficient and effective manner. It supports victims' participation and allows for effective investigation, prosecution and sentencing of domestic violence cases while diligently ensuring that the victim's safety is paramount. The project has become a valued component of the collaborative community response to domestic violence. The grant helps fund the Court Case Coordinator and a Partner Safety Check worker positions for the project.

Approved Grants for Community-based Programs

Central Alberta Women's Outreach Society (CAWOS)	**$116,125**

Central Alberta Women's Outreach Society's (CAWOS) mission is to 'help women who have chosen to pursue a safer, healthier and more secure life for themselves and their families'. CAWOS works in collaboration with a number of organizations in the Red Deer region to support the Domestic Violence Court Coordination Project to ensure domestic violence cases are dealt with in a timely, efficient and effective manner in the court system. As part of the expansion of the Project, the team plans to add a Domestic Violence Support Worker and a RCMP-based Domestic Violence Liaison Worker. This will assist individuals considered low to moderate risk affected by family violence to have opportunities to receive support in a more timely fashion. These positions are designed to meet with and support victims of family violence who for one reason or another may not have entered the judicial system. The focus of these positions is to prevent further victimization and further involvement in the judicial system.

Changing Together – A Centre for Immigrant Women	**$90,000**

Changing Together – A Centre for Immigrant Women was founded in 1984. It is a not for profit charitable organization operated by immigrant women for immigrant women. The centre began providing services to victims of human trafficking in 2004. The program has developed a coordinated response to victims of human trafficking in Alberta and provides general education and public awareness of the issue of human trafficking across the province.

Community Initiatives Against Family Violence	**$100,000**

Community Initiatives Against Family Violence (CIAFV) was established in 1999 after the Mayor's Task Force on Safer Cities invited community and government service providers to come together and discuss family violence issues in Edmonton. CIAFV is made up of representatives from community based social agencies and government. Their goal is to reduce incidents of family violence and bullying through a coordinated, collaborative approach. Key activities include: addressing family violence, developing interagency protocols, developing task/time specific project teams, providing on-going training to social service agencies and creating a communications plan (including website improvements). These services help fill the gaps across organizations working directly on issues of family violence in the Edmonton area.

Approved Grants for Community-based Programs

Diverse Voices	**$20,000**
Diverse Voices has produced an annual family violence conference in Edmonton since 2000. The initiative has expanded from 200 delegates attending the first conference to 664 attendees in 2008. Conferences have included a diverse array of topics relating to family violence and attract participants at the working and management level from many disciplines. Past offerings have provided participants with learning opportunities and the chance to network with other service providers.	

HomeFront Society for the Prevention of Domestic Violence	**$100,000**
HomeFront is a coordinated justice-community response that addressed the issue of domestic violence within the Calgary municipal area. HomeFront utilizes partnerships within the law enforcement/criminal justice systems and numerous community agencies to provide a continuum of services to families in Calgary impacted by domestic violence. HomeFront provides services through three programs: Early Intervention and Outreach, the Specialized Domestic Violence Court Program, and the Partner Support Program. Grant funding will support the work of the latter two programs. The Specialized Domestic Violence Court Case Work Program ensures that critical information about a case is available to the domestic violence court promoting more effective sentencing and reduced recidivism by offenders. The Partner Support Program provides information and support to victims during the period of their abuser's community supervision allowing the victim to assess the level of danger they may face allowing them to develop strategies to increase their personal safety.	

Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council Victims Services	**$48,300* + $115,000 ****
***Grant increase for 2008-2009 / **For next Grant Term**	
The Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council Victim Services provides victim assistance services to five diverse First Nation communities located on the shores of Lesser Slave Lake. The grant funds allow the Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council to continue to provide victim services in a manner sensitive to Aboriginal culture, spirituality, religious customs and languages. The five Aboriginal First Nations that Slave Lake Victim Services assist have differing customs and cultures; consequently, victim advocates are needed from each community to provide culturally appropriate services.	

Approved Grants for Community-Based Programs

Mediation and Restorative Justice Centre	**$100,000**

The Mediation and Restorative Justice Centre (MRJC) is a not for profit organization that offers a number of programs and services in the areas of restorative justice and community mediation. In 2008-2009, the MRJC received grant funding to support the implementation of the 'Victim Offender Restorative Justice Dialogue Program'. This program aims to provide victims of crime with an opportunity to address the impact of harm/crime as a recognized participant in the criminal justice system.

Multicultural Women & Seniors Services Association	**$92,500**

The Multicultural Women & Seniors Services Association of Edmonton (MWSSA) is a not for profit organization that works towards the successful integration and participation of newcomers to Canada by providing settlement services, information sessions, referrals to other service providers, language and computer classes, family supports, interpretation and translation services, health advice, home and hospital visits, and seniors and women's programs. Funding will help support the *Responding to Victims in the South Asian Community* project, and provide culturally linguistically appropriate services in dealing with family violence issues and the criminal justice system.

Project KARE	**$87,000**

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) "K" Division first initiated Project KARE in 2003. The program investigates the death and disappearance of people with high risk life-styles in Alberta. The program also works with this segment of the population to minimize the risk of homicide. The goal of Project KARE victim services is to ensure that support and timely information are shared with victims' loved ones. Each time an unidentified victim is found the coordinator handles multiple calls from families with missing daughters seeking information. Recent investigations have led to a number of charges which have increased the program's workload providing court support and information.

Approved Grants for Community-based Programs

Siksika Crisis Response Team	**$142,000**
The Siksika Crisis Response Team (SCRT) was formed in 1997 in response to an increased number of suicides in the Siksika Nation. From 1997 to present, the SCRT has expanded its services to respond to all crisis matters in the community including domestic incidents and victims of crime. Services are provided through a twenty-four hour emergency telephone line, and an on-call basis. Grant funding has assisted the SCRT with training expenses, and promoting greater public awareness about their services.	

Strathcona Shelter Society Ltd. (A Safe Place)	**$40,000**
The Strathcona Shelter Society provides accommodation for women and children fleeing domestic violence. The shelter provides accommodation for up to twenty-one days, including food, clothing, crisis counseling, child care and emergency transportation. The shelter also provides programming to increase awareness about the dynamics of abuse, impacts of child abuse, safety planning, and orientation to additional community resources. The grant will help fund a victim advocate position for the shelter. This position provides information, referrals, and court accompaniment as well as supports for human trafficking victims. Funding will also help the shelter develop tools to assist vulnerable populations facing complex legal challenges.	

Zebra Child Protection Centre Society	**$50,000**
The Zebra Centre is located in Edmonton, and is based on a multi-disciplinary model of care for child physical and sexual abuse victims. Zebra's Child Advocacy Program is staffed by volunteer advocates who maintain continuity with victims and caregivers throughout their involvement with the criminal justice process. Advocates also conduct support assessments to determine the appropriate level of assistance.	

Sub Total (One-Year Grants): $1,765,984

Approved Grants for Community-based Programs

Multi-Year Grants:

ASSIST Community Services	**$61,960**
ASSIST Community Services Centre was established in 1977 to address the needs of Edmonton's Chinese population. In 2003, ASSIST established the Responding to Victims of Crime in the Chinese Community Program in partnership with the Edmonton John Howard Society Family Violence Prevention Centre. This program provides outreach services to Chinese victims of family violence and assists witnesses through the court process. Because of their success, ASSIST has been asked to help replicate the Chinese model in other ethnic communities. Grant funding will be used to support staff positions allowing for the continued provision of outreach services to family violence victims in the Chinese community as well as provide mentorship to agencies wishing to adapt this model to their own culture.	

Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse Society	**$50,000**
Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse (CCASA) is the primary sexual assault and sexual abuse crisis and education provider in Calgary and surrounding area. The organization runs five programs aimed at building community awareness of sexual assault/abuse and reducing the related trauma. They are: Counseling, Volunteer, Police and Court Support, Outreach and Education. Funding helps support the Police and Court Education and Support Program (PACES). PACES supports survivors as they navigate through the justice system, advocates for survivors within the system, and affects change at the policy level to help decrease re-traumatization that can occur within the system.	

Crisis Centre: Sexual Abuse, Violence, Education and Support	**$65,000**
The Crisis Centre provides victims of sexual assault (and their families) with immediate in-office crisis support including: court preparation, court accompaniment, hospital accompaniment, and accompaniment to the RCMP to file a report. The Centre also assists victims with filling out Financial Benefits applications and Request for Restitution forms. The goal of the Crisis Centre is to provide a continuum of services to support individuals who have been sexually assaulted.	

Approved Grants for Community-based Programs

Edmonton John Howard Society Victims' Assistance Program	**$100,000**

The Edmonton John Howard Society (EJHS) is a not for profit organization that has served the Edmonton community for over 50 years. EJHS's vision is: 'safety and harmony in the community'. Their mission is: 'through our programs and services, we work to prevent crime and to help people affected by crime'. EJHS provides a number of programs and services including a Victims' Assistance Program (VAP). VAP was established in 1993 to provide information and support to victims and witnesses of crime. The mandate of VAP is to assist and support victims of family violence going through the criminal court process by providing information such as court updates and bail hearing updates/release conditions, helping with court preparation, accompanying victims to court, providing emotional support, making community referrals, and ongoing risk assessment and safety planning.

Family Law Office	**$50,000**

The Family Law Office (FLO) is a permanent program of the Legal Aid Society of Alberta. FLO provides legal advice and representation at all levels of court to clients with family law issues who qualify for Legal Aid. The office deals mostly with child protection matters, divorce, parenting and contact, child support, spousal support, property and family violence issues. In 2004, FLO expanded their services to include the Edmonton Protection Order Program (EPOP). EPOP provides comprehensive legal services at no cost to victims of family violence who require Emergency Protection Orders and offers a single entry point for claimants, agencies and police to access the civil court system.

Providing Assistance, Counseling & Education (PACE)	**$37,207**

Providing Assistance, Counseling and Education (PACE) is located in Grande Prairie and provides service to individuals and communities dealing with sexual assault/abuse in North Western Alberta. PACE provides standardized crisis intervention training programs to community members, front line workers and volunteers. Among other services, PACE provides therapy for child and adult survivors of sexual abuse; family counseling for youth at risk and their families; a twenty-four hour sexual assault help line; suicide prevention programs and a Sexual Assault Court Program (which includes court orientation, support, and accompaniment).

Approved Grants for Community-based Programs

Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton (SACE)	**$141,830**
The Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton (SACE) began as a community initiative in 1975 to empower individuals and communities affected by sexual assault to take action against sexual violence. In 2003, SACE implemented the Diversity Outreach and Intake/Court Support Program. This Program is the result of a 6 year study that emphasized the need to strengthen relationships with diverse communities in Edmonton including: First Nations, persons with disabilities and gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and trans-gendered individuals.	

Saffron Centre Ltd. (SAFFRON)	**$60,000**
SAFFRON was established in 2000 to promote awareness about sexual violence within the community, and provide supports to victims and survivors through referrals to programs and services in the community, as well as provide information about the Criminal Justice System through the Seeds of Healing Program. In recent years, SAFFRON developed a series of sexual violence protocols to ensure timely access to resources and information. In 2007-2008, SAFFRON experienced a significant increase in demand from the community for programming to promote awareness about internet safety for youth. Over this time SAFFRON staff provided 127 school presentations to over 5000 students and 225 educators. This has resulted in an increase in referrals to the centre. Grant funding will assist in building capacity to the growing demands in this area.	

Tsuu T'ina Nation Band	**$109,896**
The Tsuu T'ina Nation Band provides victims services with an Aboriginal focus. Referrals are received from a variety of sources, including: police services, other Victim Service Units, community agencies and court workers. The band serves a number of areas including the remote community of Eden Valley. Funding will assist the Tsuu T'ina Nation Band to increase the number of active volunteer advocates serving these communities.	

Sub Total (Multi-Year Grants): $675,893

Total Grants Provided to Community-Based Programs in 2008-2009: $2,441,877

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

Introduction

Information on the 2008-2009 activities of victim service programs was collected using the Quarterly Report Form. The Report Form collects information on the number of new cases, the number of persons assisted, and the type of assistance provided. For each of these variables, the Report Form categorizes assistance provided as either:

- Criminal Code – Violent (e.g. homicide, violent sex offences, serious assaults, domestic violence, etc.)
- Criminal Code – Non-Violent (e.g. forgery, fraud, theft etc.)
- Offence Non-criminal (offences that do not fall within the Criminal Code of Canada, i.e., Provincial Statute Offences)
- Assistance – No offence (e.g. non-criminal sudden death, notifying next-of-kin, motor vehicle collisions, suicide, etc.).

The Report Form quantifies:

- the number of Victim Impact Statements distributed to victims of crime.
- the number of Victim Impact Statement Notification Forms that have been completed and forwarded to the Court and Crown prosecutor.
- the number of requests for restitution completed and forwarded to Crown prosecutor offices.
- the number of Victim of Crime Protocol documents distributed to victims.
- volunteer statistics including the number of advocates, the hours volunteered, the type of activities performed and staffing levels.

The Report also collects statistics on victim referrals to victim service units, whether from police or other sources.

New Cases

Victim service programs reported 43,122 new cases during the 2008-2009 fiscal year, a slight decrease (1%) compared to 44,736 new cases reported in 2007-2008.

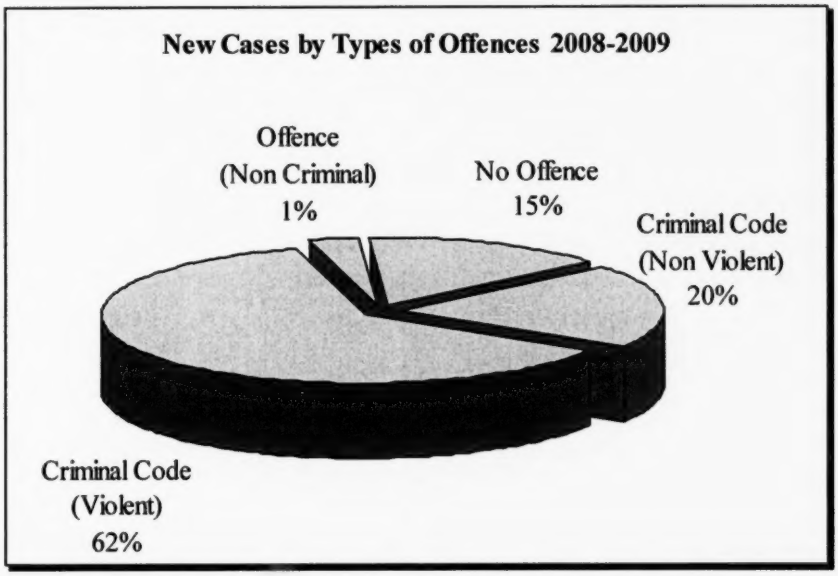

New Cases by Types of Offences 2008-2009
Offence (Non Criminal) 1%
No Offence 15%
Criminal Code (Non Violent) 20%
Criminal Code (Violent) 62%

Figure 4

New cases refer only to files opened during the reporting quarter. A case may involve multiple victims and family members or friends affected by a criminal incident. Of the 43,122 new cases, approximately 62% involved assisting victims of 'Violent' Criminal Code offences' (**Figure 4**), while 20% assisted victims of 'Non Violent' Criminal Code offences.

These percentages indicate an approximate 5% increase in new 'Violent' criminal cases reported to victim service units compared to 2007-2008, and a decrease in the number of 'Non-Violent' Criminal cases reported by 5%.

Persons Assisted

Programs reported providing assistance to 58,828 people, a slight decrease (1%) compared to 2007-2008. Of persons assisted during this period, 48,877 (83%) were adults and 9,951 (17%) were under the age of 18. Fifty-six percent of people assisted were victims of a 'Violent' Criminal Code offence, while another 20% were victims of 'Non-violent Criminal Code offences (**Figure 5**).

Compared to 2007-2008, there was a 1% *increase* in persons assisted who were victims of a 'Violent' Criminal Code offence. It is worth noting that an increase in persons assisted does not necessarily indicate an increase in crime, but may reflect an increasing awareness of their services. Other indicators for 2008-2009 demonstrate either no change, or a slight decrease in persons assisted: 'Non-Violent' Criminal Code offences *decreased* by 1%, persons assisted in the 'No Offence' category remained relatively unchanged from the previous year, and there was a 1% *decrease* in persons assisted in 'Non-Criminal' offences.

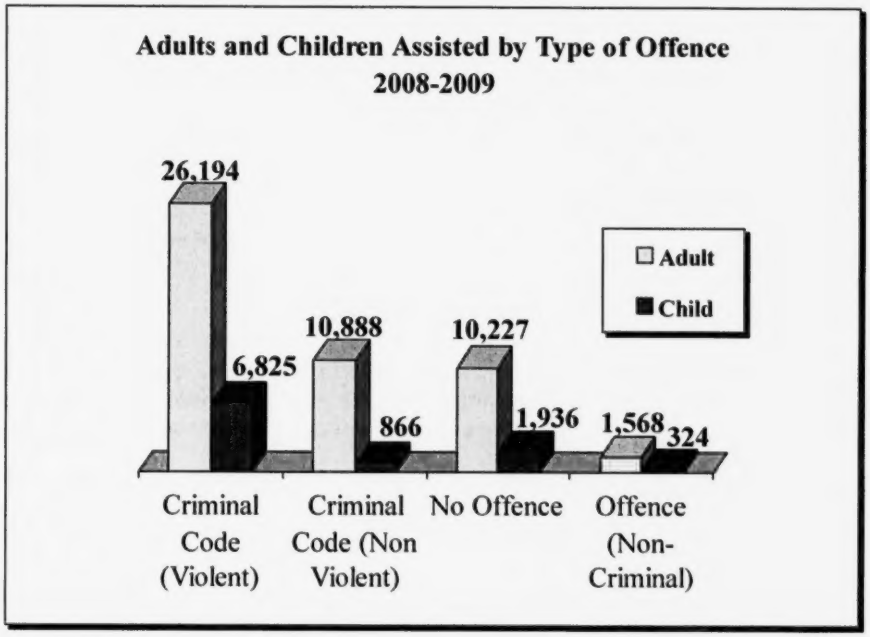


Figure 5

Type of Assistance

'Providing information' was the type of assistance most frequently reported for new and ongoing cases (62,072); which represents almost no change from 2007-2008 (**Figure 6**). The 'Intervention' category, which includes crisis response, notification of next of kin, or practical assistance at a crime scene, was the second most common type of assistance reported (39,864 cases), a 2% increase from 2007-2008. 'Referrals to other agencies' (29,894 cases) increased by 9% from 2007-2008.

'Courtroom support' was provided in 8,715 cases primarily involving violent Criminal Code matters, an 8% increase over last year.

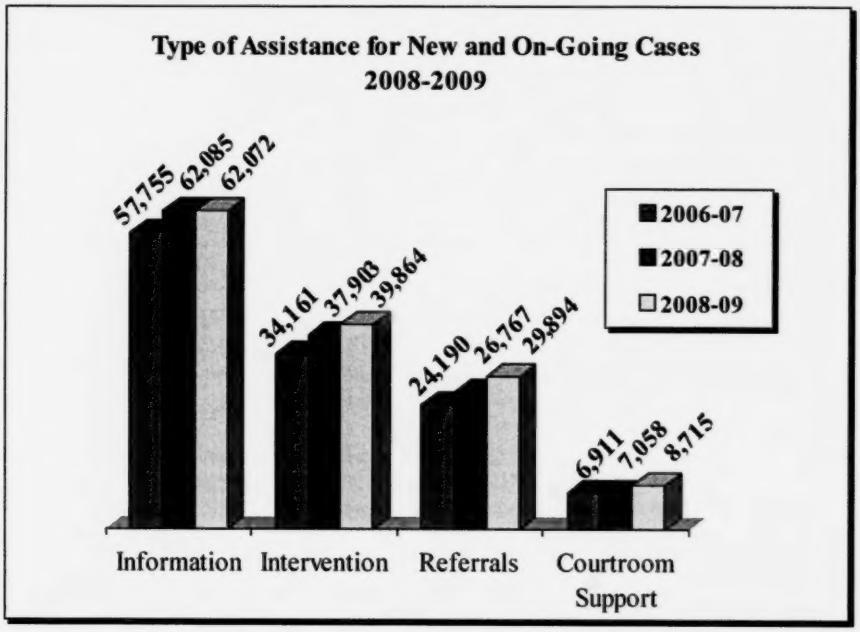


Figure 6

VICTIMS DESERVE TO BE HEARD

Volunteers

Alberta's culture of volunteerism is evident in the commitment of the 1,916 volunteers who assist in the delivery of local programs. These volunteers include board members as well as advocates, coordinators, and support workers who help victims that are often complete strangers. The dedication of volunteers in assisting victims of crime is vital to the success of the Ministry's mandate to ensure that victims of crime have timely access to information and services while they are involved in the criminal justice system. Volunteers donate their time in differing capacities to either police-based or community-based victim service programs.

They consistently conduct their volunteer duties with professionalism, integrity, care and compassion. Without these committed members of the community, assistance and services for crime victims in Alberta could not exist.

In 2008-2009, volunteers contributed a total of 178,659 hours, a decrease of 9% from the 201,118 hours volunteered in 2007-2008. This indicates a continuing decline in the percentage of volunteer hours for victims programs over the past three years. The total number of volunteers decreased slightly from 2,023 in 2007-2008 to 1,916 in 2008-2009.

In summary, in 2008-2009 fewer volunteers dedicated less time to victims programs, however, there was increased demand for intervention and courtroom support for new and on-going cases, which may have been alleviated in part through greater collaboration with referral agencies.

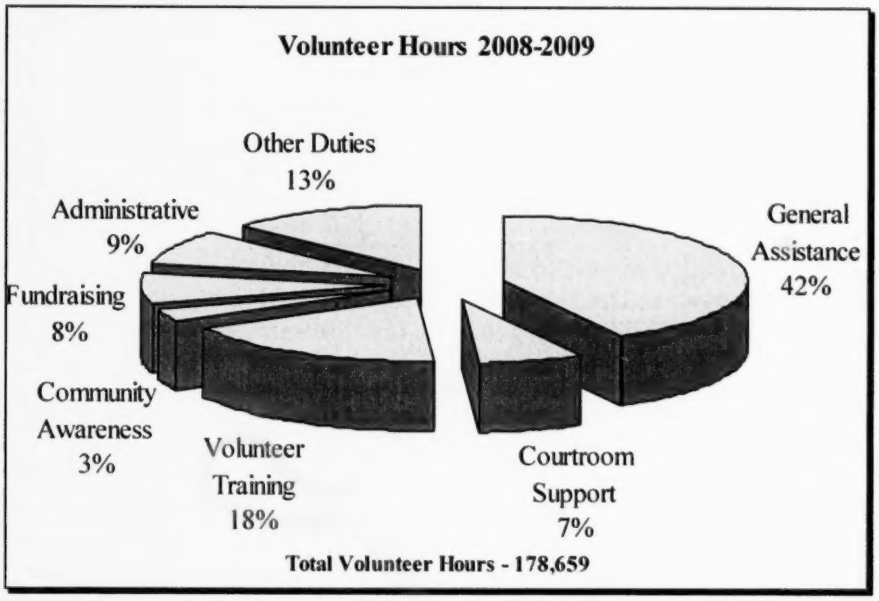


Figure 7

Volunteer Hours

Forty-two percent of those hours were spent providing general assistance (information, intervention and referrals) to victims of crime. Eighteen percent of volunteer hours were dedicated to volunteer training, followed by other duties (travel, meetings) at approximately 13%. Remaining volunteer hours were spent on administrative duties (9%), fundraising (8%), court room support (7%), and raising community awareness (3%) (**Figure 7**).

As in past years, the distribution of volunteer hours between categories did not vary significantly from the previous year. This would indicate that the decline in volunteers and the similar decline in the percentage of their time dedicated to supporting victims programs is evenly distributed across all of the voluntary activities identified.

SOLICITOR GENERAL AND PUBLIC SECURITY VICTIM PROGRAMS INITIATIVES

Initiatives

In addition to the activities performed by police-based and community victim assistance organizations, and the services provided by the Victims Services Branch, several initiatives have been implemented to enhance the supports for victims of crime as they navigate the criminal justice system. A number of these programs and projects were achieved in partnership with our stakeholders, including victim assistance organizations, Municipal and First Nations police services, the RCMP, Alberta Justice and Attorney General and the Alberta Police-Based Victim Services Association.

Victims of Crime Protocol: What Victims Can Expect from the Criminal Justice System

The Victims of Crime Protocol: What Victims Can Expect from the Criminal Justice System (*Protocol*) is a step-by-step guide for victims of crime. The *Protocol* assists victims by outlining their role, the types of information they can receive and the services they can expect, from the time a crime is reported through to the police investigation and court proceedings. Information on provincial and federal corrections and the National Parole Board is included, in the event the accused is found guilty. In addition, the *Protocol* explains what is expected of victims when dealing with the criminal justice system.

The *Protocol* was developed in response to a recommendation from the *Report of the Alberta Victims of Crime Consultation,* which included input from victims of crime, police services, victim service programs, Crown prosecutors, Court Services, community agencies, the judiciary, sheriffs, the Office of the Medical Examiner, military police, Correctional Service of Canada and the National Parole Board.

The *Victims of Crime Protocol* reflects the strong commitment of the Government of Alberta to treat victims of crime with courtesy, compassion and respect; to protect their safety and privacy; and to provide timely and useful information to victims while they are in contact with the criminal justice system. The *Protocol* is the first of its kind in Canada and has attracted national and international interest. Over 54,000 copies of the *Protocol* have been distributed to programs since 2006-2007; 7,048 of these were distributed in 2008-2009. An additional 5,000 copies were reprinted in 2008-2009 available for future requests.

In 2008-2009, an audio version was developed to better meet the needs of Albertans with visual impairments and/or low literacy.

Victims of Crime Protocol: Roles and Responsibilities

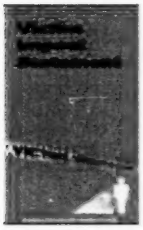
A companion document to the *Victims of Crime Protocol* is the *Victims of Crime Protocol: Roles and Responsibilities*. While the *Protocol* is designed for victims of crime, the *Roles and Responsibilities* document was written for staff within the criminal justice system. The document outlines what is expected of professionals in the justice system as they work with victims of crime. Over 6,000 copies of this document have been distributed since 2006; 176 of these were distributed in 2008-2009. An additional 380 were reprinted in 2008-2009 available for future requests.

Victims of Crime Protocol Evaluation

In the fall of 2008, a formative and summative evaluation of the *Victims of Crime Protocol* handbook and *Roles & Responsibilities* binder was launched. The purpose of the evaluation is to document and review the implementation process identifying strengths, limitations, and areas for improvement as well as measure the benefits of the *Protocol* for victims of crime.

Victim Impact Statement Program

The Victim Impact Statement Program provides victims in Alberta with an opportunity to have input into sentencing by describing in writing, to the Court, how they have been affected by the crime.



Police are required to notify all victims of crime about the victim impact statement and provide information on where the Victim Impact Statement Form and information to complete it can be obtained.

Prior to sentencing, the Court is required to inquire if the victim has been advised of their opportunity to prepare a statement and may adjourn proceedings to permit the victim time to prepare a statement. Victims have the option of reading their statement aloud in court.

As a result of guideline changes, beginning April 1, 2005, victim service programs began tracking the number of Victim Impact Statement packages they distributed to victims, and the number of Victim Impact Statement Notification Forms forwarded to the Clerk of the Court and the Crown Prosecutors' Office.

In fiscal year 2008-2009, victim service programs reported the distribution of 12,934 Victim Impact Statement packages to victims of crime in Alberta (**Figure 7**). Victim service programs completed 4,222 Victim Impact Statement Notification Forms and forwarded them to the Clerk of the Court and Crown Prosecutors' Offices, after charges had been laid.

Victim Advocate Training Manual

The Solicitor General and Public Security distributes the *Victim Advocate Training Manual* to victim service organizations throughout Alberta. The Manual establishes a provincial standard for victim advocate training and creates an opportunity for volunteer victim advocates to receive certification. Victims Services is in the process of developing four new modules on emerging crime trends and revising existing modules to reflect changes in legislation and policy. The new modules will address issues for victims of human trafficking, online sexual exploitation and cyber crime. In addition a new module that addresses the unique needs of gender diverse victims of crime is being developed. In 2008-2009, 122 victim service advocates and program coordinators received certification.

Victim Assistance Coordinator Training

In 2008-2009, 59 participants attended the Victim Assistance Coordinators' Training that was held in February 2009. Training sessions were delivered to victim service program coordinators, victim advocates, police officers, Court Services staff, Crown prosecutors and criminal justice staff, Alberta Solicitor General and Public Security staff, Department of National Defense staff, and Aboriginal representatives. The training provided information about the criminal justice system, federal and provincial legislation concerning victims of crime, and information about related programs assisting victims in Alberta.

Advanced Coordinator Training

In 2008-2009, 32 participants attended the Advanced Coordinators' Training Course that was held in November 2008. Topics included: internet child exploitation, Indian residential schools, the Alberta Relationship Threat Assessment and Management Initiative (ARTAMI), restorative justice, human trafficking and sexual assault.

Aboriginal Awareness Training

An Aboriginal Awareness Training Curriculum was developed, in partnership with an Advisory Committee, consisting of victim service unit coordinators, Elders, RCMP, and the Aboriginal Justice Initiatives Unit. The second training was hosted at Blue Quills First Nations College in May, 2008 and included sessions on: history, Indian Residential Schools, promising practices in working with Indigenous communities, Dene language and culture, and circle process. This training also included access to a sweat lodge ceremony, a pipe ceremony, a traditional feast and experiential learning in regard to cultural arts and crafts.

Under-served Aboriginal Pilot Project

The Under-served Aboriginal Pilot Project is a three-year project between Solicitor General and Public Security Victims Programs (Alberta Government) and Justice Canada (federal government) with a goal to improve service to under-served victims of crime. Two Alberta victim service units (St. Paul and Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council) were identified as locations to pilot underserved communities. Funding from Justice Canada is used to support full time staff and related costs. This project concludes on March 31, 2011.

CANTALK

CanTalk

CanTalk (Canada) Inc. provides a number of communication services including immediate interpretation and translation in over 110 languages, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. From June 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009, eleven different Victim Service Associations used CANTALK for a total of 162 phone calls in twenty-five different languages.

Victims of Crime Website

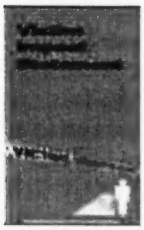
The Solicitor General and Public Security's Victims of Crime website contains a wide range of information on victims programs and services in Alberta including:

- Victims of Crime Protocol
- Help for victims of crime
- Financial Benefits Program
- Victims of Crime Fund Grants Program
- Victim Impact Statement Program
- Requesting Restitution Program
- Branch publications

Contact information for Victim Service Units, Community Programs, and the Victims Services Branch, Solicitor General and Public Security.

The website address is: www.victims.alberta.ca

Number of Packages Distributed



VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT PROGRAM

Victim Impact Statement packages were most often distributed by victim service programs in relation to assault (other) (3,972), followed by domestic assault (3,764), and sexual assault (1,120).

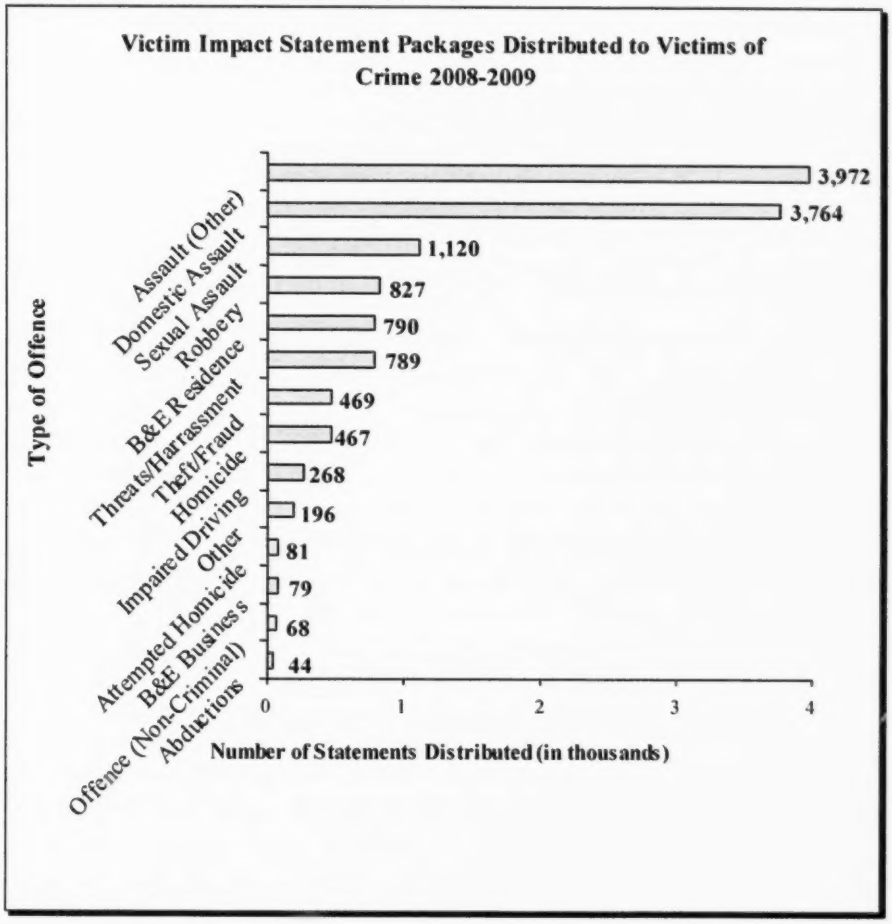


Figure 8

The least number of Victim Impact Statement Packages were distributed in cases of abductions (44), non-criminal offence (68), and break and enter-business (79) (**Figure 8**).

Number of Statement Notification Forms Forwarded

The three categories of offences which saw the most Victim Impact Statement Notification Forms forwarded to the Crown were domestic assault (1,277), assault (other) (884), and sexual assault (682).

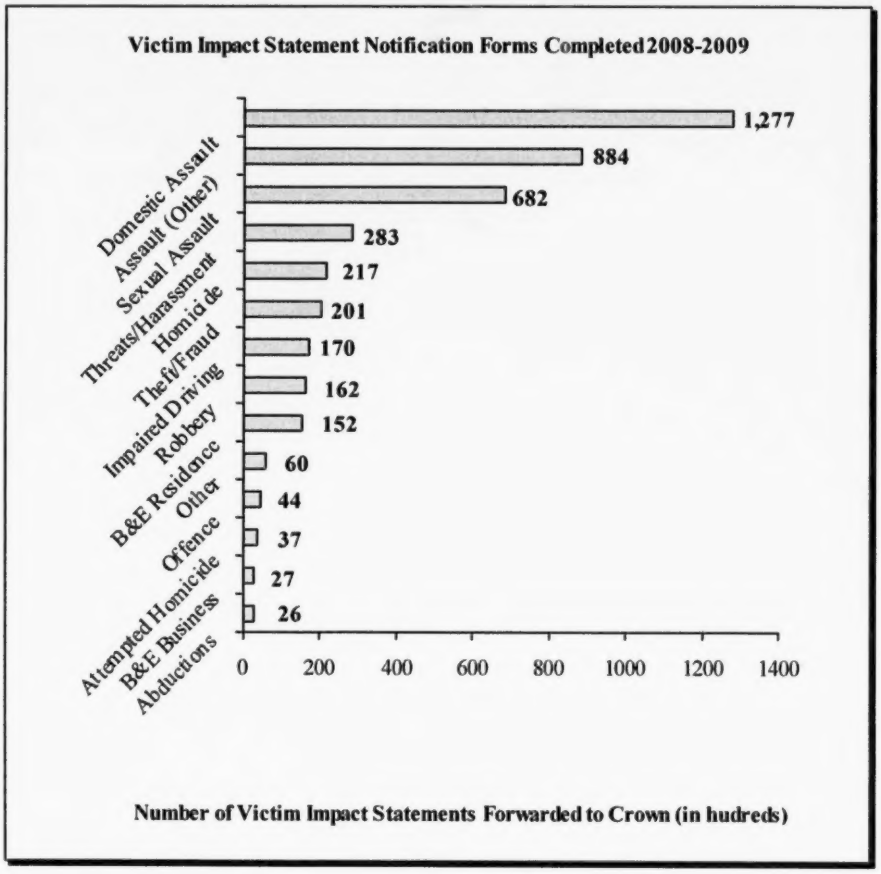


Figure 9

The least number were forwarded in cases of abductions (26), break and enters for businesses (27), and attempted homicide (37) (**Figure 9**).

REQUESTING RESTITUTION PROGRAM

Requesting Restitution Program

The Requesting Restitution Program provides victims of crime who have suffered a financial loss, with information about how they can request that the offender pay restitution. A crime victim may complete a Request for Restitution Form provided by the investigating police officer or a victim services worker. Once the form is completed, the victim returns it to police for forwarding to the Crown prosecutor. Upon review, the Crown prosecutor may make the application for restitution to the Court, or may decline to do so. If the Crown declines, the victim may request the Court to order restitution.

Restitution may be ordered for: damage, destruction and loss of property, psychological and/or bodily harm, expenses incurred in moving out of an offender's residence in spousal abuse cases, and for losses incurred by unknowingly purchasing or lending money on stolen property.

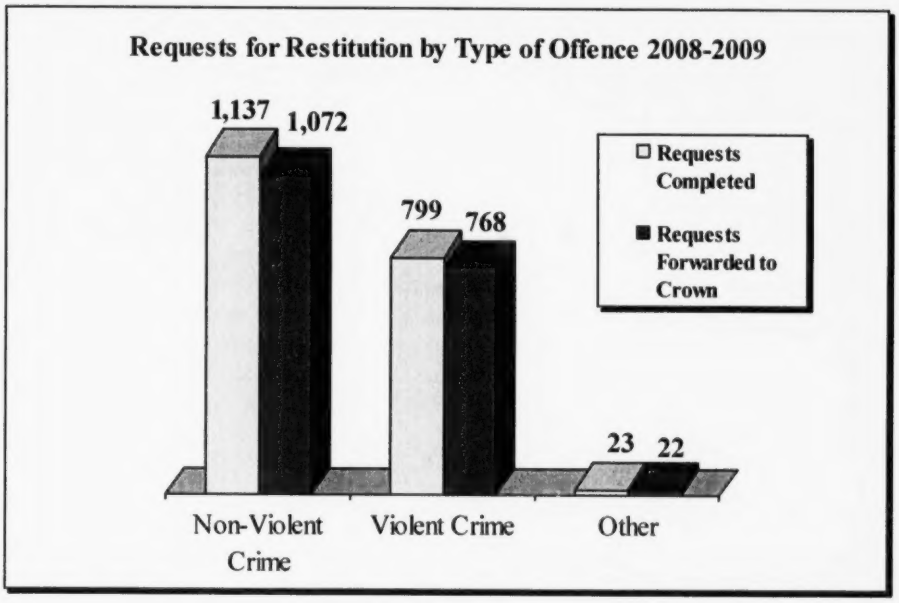


Figure 10

For the 2008-2009 period, 1,959 Requests for Restitution were completed and returned to police (representing a 7% increase over 2007-2008). Of the requests for restitution completed, 1,862 were forwarded to the Crown after charges were laid (an 8% increase over 2007-2008).The majority of Requests for Restitution forwarded to the Crown concerned Non-Violent Crime. The next largest category was Violent Crime followed by Other (**Figure 10**).

Victims Services Branch Organizational Chart 2008-2009